

Application No. 10/075,437
Amendment filed September 29, 2003
Reply to Office Action dated June 27, 2003

Attorney Docket No. 032674-142
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REMARKS

Claims 1-23 are pending, with claims 1, 8, 12, 22, and 23 being in independent form.

At the outset, Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter.

In the Office Action, claims 8-11 and 23 stand rejected for obviousness over U.S. Patent No. 5,623,254 to Brambilla et al. ("Brambilla"). Applicant believes these claims to be allowable for the following reasons.

In accordance with the MPEP, three criteria must be met to establish a prima facie case of obviousness. First, the cited documents must describe or suggest all of the claim features. Second, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the cited documents themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to have combined the teachings of the cited documents. Third, there must have been a reasonable expectation that the documents could have been successfully combined to yield the claimed invention.

The rejection raised in the Action cannot stand at least because the cited document does not describe or suggest all of the claim features. Motivations to modify the cited document as suggested in the Action and a reasonable expectation of success would also be absent, but it should be sufficient to point out the absent features.

For example, claim 8 recites, among other things, "a current mirror that produces a mirrored write current that is proportional to the write current that is passed through the inductive head assembly under normal operating conditions" (emphasis added). While Brambilla does disclose a current mirror, Brambilla's current mirror does not produce a current that is proportional to the write current that is passed through the inductive head assembly under normal operating conditions as required by claim 8.

Assuming only for purposes of this response that Brambilla's load 5 is an inductive head assembly, a write current passing through such a load under normal operating conditions would flow through the load 5, into the driver circuit 1, consisting of transistor 2 and resistor 7, and then to the ground terminal (see FIGS. 1 and 2, and col. 1, ll. 21-28). Brambilla's current mirror circuit 28 does not produce a

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mirrored write current proportional to a current passing through the load 5 and driver circuit 1 under normal operating conditions, as claim 8 requires.

Instead, Brambilla's current mirror produces a current that is based on a voltage produced at output 4 of the driver circuit 1 under either an open-circuit or a short-circuit condition. Under normal operating conditions, the diode 33 linking Brambilla's current mirror circuit 28 to the driver circuit 1 ensures that the current-mirror circuit 28 and the driver circuit 1 are isolated from one another. Indeed, Brambilla describes that "diode 33 also provides for disconnecting identifying circuit 12 if load 5 is connected during operation of drive circuit 1, to prevent it from interfering with normal operation of the drive circuit. Col. 4, ll. 23-27. Accordingly, Brambilla's current mirror 28 cannot produce a mirrored write current that is proportional to the write current that is passed through the inductive head assembly under normal operating conditions, because the current mirror 28 is disconnected from the driver circuit 1 under such operating conditions.

In contrast, the current mirror comprising transistors Q9 and Q10 of FIG. 2 as described in this application produce a mirrored write current $I_{wg'}$ that is proportional to the write current I_{wc} ($=I_{wg}$) that is passed through the inductive head assembly "Head 0" under normal operating conditions as defined by claim 8.

Because the cited document does not describe or suggest all of the features recited in claim 8, Applicant believes the claim to be allowable over the cited document. The same can be said for claim 23, which recites "generating a mirrored write current that is proportional to the write current that is passed through the inductive head assembly under normal operating conditions". Moreover, claims 9-11, which ultimately depend from claim 8, are believed to be allowable for at least these same reasons. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 8-11, and 23 based on Brambilla.

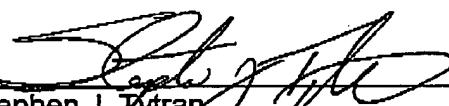
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For the foregoing reasons, the Applicant believes the application to be in condition for allowance, and respectfully requests a Notice thereof be provided at an early date. If any questions remain, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

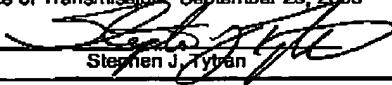
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